



**FOR RELEASE**  
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**Rhode Island Unemployment Rate for April Holds Steady at 5.3 Percent  
Remains Below National Average for Twenty-one Straight Months**

Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Director Marvin D. Perry announced today that Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for April was 5.3 percent, unchanged from the March estimate. The number of unemployed Rhode Island residents in April equaled the March level of 30,300. A year ago April, the unemployment rate was 4.9 percent and the jobless level stood at 27,300. The national unemployment rate, which climbed 0.2 of a percentage point to 6.0 percent in April, matched December's eight-year high. Rhode Island's unemployment rate remained below the national average for the twenty-first consecutive month.

	<u>Apr. 03</u>	<u>Mar. 03</u>	<u>Apr. 02</u>
Rhode Island	5.3%	5.3%	4.9%*
United States	6.0%	5.8%	5.9%
* Revised			

"Our unemployment rate seems to have stabilized over the past four months after peaking at 5.5 percent in December," said Director Perry. "Now that the warmer weather is here and the federal focus has shifted from the war in Iraq to tax cuts, we have reason to be optimistic about the economy in the coming months."

**Rhode Island Job Highlights**

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of jobs stood at 478,900 in April, unchanged from the March (revised) level, but slightly higher (+200) than last year. Within the Private sector, monthly employment gains in Professional & Business Services (+1,100), Leisure & Hospitality (+600), Trade, Transportation & Utilities (+500), and Other Services (+200) offset losses in other industries, most notably Manufacturing (-600). Government employment was down 300 over the month.

Our unadjusted estimates show the number of jobs at Rhode Island businesses at 477,900 in April 2003, down slightly (-600) from the 478,500 jobs reported last year. This marks the first over-the-year loss in twelve months. Large employment losses in Manufacturing (-2,400), Professional & Technical Services (-1,300) and Administrative & Waste Services (-1,200) overshadowed gains in Health Care & Social Assistance (+1,500), Other Services (+1,400) and Retail Trade (+700). Government employment decreased by 600 over the year due to declines in State Government (-400) and Local Government (-300) jobs.

The more detailed unadjusted estimates increased by 5,700 over the month due to increases in several industries, the largest attributed to seasonal gains in Accommodation & Food Services (+1,900), Construction (+1,500), Administrative & Waste Services (+1,300) and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (+1,000). The largest decrease was reported in Government employment (-500) as the April school vacation period resulted in a temporary loss of 500 jobs at the Local level.

The \$12.84 average hourly wage earned by the Manufacturing sector's production workers in April 2003 represents an over-the-month gain of two cents per hour and a yearly gain of ten cents per hour. In April 2003, Manufacturing employees worked an average of 38.6 weekly hours, down seven-tenths of an hour over the month and one-tenth of an hour over the year.

**- More -**

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[www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi](http://www.dlt.state.ri.us/lmi)



Governor Donald L. Carcieri

Director Marvin D. Perry



**Note:** The unemployment figures are based largely on a survey of households in Rhode Island and measure the unemployment status of people who live in the State. Several changes affect the household data beginning with the release of the January 2003 estimates. The major change is the incorporation of new population controls that reflect Census 2000 data. This resulted in a break in the series from December 1999 to January 2000. In addition, beginning in 2003, some modifications relating to the Census were made to the estimation process, along with some changes to the seasonal adjustment procedure. In light of these changes, caution should be exercised when making comparisons with prior years.

The employment figures in the “Job Highlights” section are derived from a survey of businesses in Rhode Island and measure the number of jobs in the State. Monthly establishment employment data is now being published using the new North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). This new industry coding system replaces the outdated Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system, which was previously used. While many of the new NAICS sectors reflect recognizable parts of the SIC divisions, **it is important to note that not all industries classified under a particular SIC division are classified under a similarly titled NAICS sector.** For example, Eating & Drinking Places, which were classified in the Retail Trade division under SIC, are now classified in the new Accommodation & Food Services sector, which also includes Hotels & Other Lodging Places. **For more information on this new system, visit our web site at [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/naics/naics.htm](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/es202/naics/naics.htm).**

**Rhode Island Labor Market Information is available on our web site at [www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi](http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi)  
The May labor force figures are scheduled to be released on Friday, June 20, 2003.**